

When Will Peace Come?

Outline of a Sermon preached before the Synod of the Diocese of Calgary in the Pro-Cathedral Church, on Tuesday June 4th, 1918, by the Bishop of Kootenay

"And it came to pass, when Joram saw Jehu, that he said, Is it peace, Jehu? And he answered, what peace, so long as the whoredoms of thy Mother Jezebel, and her witchcrafts are so many."—II. KINGS, ix. : 22.

WHAT a strange, unexpected, sadly monotonous history is that of God's chosen people, Israel! How it repeats itself over and over again.

Apostasy from God, followed by punishment, reformation for a time; then apostasy again, punishment, reformation, and again apostasy, until all is finally closed in disaster and exile.

In the ninth chapter of the Second Book of the Kings we have the account of the beginning of a season of punishment following one of the worst periods of apostasy in Israel's history, that which took place under Ahab and his successors. Joram, the son of Ahab, is on the throne, and the time for the execution of judgment has arrived.

One of his own officers, Jehu, is chosen by God, anointed by command of Elisha, and charged to carry out the destruction of the whole house of Ahab. Swiftly he proceeds to Jezreel, with burning impatience he turns into the ranks of his followers, the messengers of the King, and at last in the portion of Naboth, the Jezreelite, he stands face to face with Joram, who had come out in his chariot to withstand him. The wretched whine of a cringing coward, "Is it peace, Jehu?" is met by the stern response, "What peace, so long as the whoredoms of thy mother, Jezebel, and her witchcrafts are so many." And Jehu, the Lord's messenger, the Lord's avenger, stands forth forever as the enunciator of the great universal truth that there can be no peace, neither talk of peace, until iniquity is put away and sin purged; no peace possible so long as those conditions still prevail which caused the cessation of peace and called for the hour of vengeance.

To-day, my brothers, the world has taken up the cry of Joram. To-day, from millions of anxious hearts the agonizing wail is heard: "Is it peace?" When will peace arrive? When will the end come to all this awful misery and suffering, this unparalleled outbreak of man's cruelty and ferocity towards man? And to-day the Church, as the Lord's messenger, must give to the world the stern, definite answer of Jehu, "What peace, so long as the whoredoms of thy mother, Jezebel, and her witchcrafts are so many?" What peace? What good in talking of peace, so long as those conditions still prevail which caused the outbreak of war? That the war is the result of sin is a self-evident fact to Christians, but it has not yet been grasped by the world, and the Church must press this primary truth upon the minds of men and women before the first step towards peace will have been taken. In Germany's dethroning of God, in her substitution of the doctrine that might is right for the doctrine of Christ, lies the primary cause of the present world-wide conflict.

But Germany is not the only country which has virtually dethroned God; the British Empire is by no means guiltless, and if we would hasten the day of peace and victory our course of wisdom would seem to be one of leaving Germany to make her own peace with God, and bending all our efforts towards the

task of reforming our own life and conduct, both as individuals and as an empire.

Your Synod, Right Reverend Father in God and brothers, meets at a moment of supreme crisis, and a heavy responsibility rests upon you.

As representatives of the Ancient Church of the British people speak you must to this part of our Empire. To speak is a great responsibility; not to speak is a greater. You must speak, and the whole Church of God must speak with you, telling men and women that there is no use talking of peace so long as those sins continue which have disgraced our national life and which still continue to disgrace it. Peace is impossible until the Empire seriously sets itself to work in an effort to fit itself to become worthy to receive peace.

"What peace so long as the whoredoms of thy mother, Jezebel, and her witchcrafts are so many?" What peace can we expect until our grave national sins are repented of and done away, until our iniquity is purged and our national life purified?

How great those national sins are!

1. God has been and continues to be practically dethroned. The great masses of the Empire do not really believe that God has anything to do with the war or the bestowal of peace. At least, if they do, their strange indifference to prayer is absolutely inexplicable. His counsel, guidance and help are certainly not being sought for by the people as a whole as they would be sought if the people really believed that they were of value, and of the utmost value. What good, then, is it to talk of peace until God has been enthroned and Christ be acknowledged as Supreme King of Kings and Lord of Lords?

2. With God dethroned, we wonder not that His laws have been despised and His Commandments treated with indifference and contempt.

This indifference and contempt still continue.

Our churches are no more thronged to-day than they were before the war. The Lord's Day is still treated as a mere holiday—a day for men, physical rest and enjoyment. Why, even at this moment of supreme crisis, when the Empire needs God as never before, a bill is before the Imperial Parliament dealing with the marriage laws and proposing changes of the most radical character, which will, if passed, make the English law regarding marriage and divorce absolutely irreconcilable with even the broadest interpretation of the teaching of Christ. What peace can we expect when Christ is thus ruled out of the national life, and dismissed from His rightful position as the Supreme Law-Giver of the nations

3. Not only so, but the most grave and terrible sins continue unabated to disgrace and disgrace our life as an Empire. Dishonesty and graft in our political and commercial life still continue. Men are not ashamed to use the present awful time of world-wide suffering and distress as an occasion for enriching themselves and oppressing the poor and needy.

Canada has prohibited the traffic in liquor but in the Mother Country the evils of intemperance still continue.

Impurity and the evils of the white slave traffic are on the increase, threatening not only the spiritual but the physical welfare of mankind with a ruin more terrible than any devastation or horror wrought directly by the war. And the Empire as such does not care; the people are simply indifferent. What peace, then, is possible, or even desirable, so long as the whoredoms of Jezebel and her witchcrafts are so many?

Far too much blood has been shed, far too costly a sacrifice has been offered, to make peace desirable if it means a return to those Godless conditions which existed prior to August 4th, 1914, and a continuance in those same conditions at present unrepented of and unaltered.

This is God's message and as the messengers of God we must proclaim it. Sternly and with fidelity. "What peace so long as the whoredoms of thy mother, Jezebel, and her witchcrafts are so many?"

But if the Church is to give the Lord's message, if she is to lead the Empire back to God, she must repent of her own sins. Only a penitent Church can speak with any chance of being heard and listened to by a critical, hostile and indifferent age.

Our party spirit, our apathy and indifference, our unnecessary separation as Christians from one another, our ecclesiasticism, our worldliness, our lack of earnestness, devotion and zeal, our lack of entire consecration to God, our practical denial of the Holy Ghost and consequent lack of deep spirituality, all these and many like sins must be confessed and pardoned before we can deliver God's message and proclaim to the world that the way of peace is to be found, and found alone, through a return to God in faith and penitence.

For peace is the possession and the gift of Christ, the Prince of Peace.

It is His and therefore it can be obtained from nowhere or no one else. He is longing to bestow it upon the world but the world must seek it from Him upon His own terms and subject to His conditions. Peace is His gift, but His gift only to those who believe in Him, honour Him and obey Him, and when the Empire is ready and prepared to come to Christ in faith and penitence and to enthrone Christ in personal, municipal, national and imperial life as Supreme King of Kings and Lord of Lords, then, but not till then, will the din of battle die away and peace come as the gift of Christ to be forever our universal and abiding possession.

THE CHRISTIAN YEAR.

(Continued from page 503.)

unreadiness to avail ourselves of God's generosity is surprising.

Deafness sometimes leads to dumbness. Possibly our dumbness in prayer is that we are not supremely concerned in the best things God has to give—spiritual and moral blessing—and so the sounds of other interests prevent us hearing with our spirits. If we simply are not hearing God and so not speaking to Him in prayer, we might study the Gospel where we see our Lord "taking aside the deaf man with the impediment in his speech" and restoring his hearing and speech. It would suggest that we go aside by ourselves and have our spiritual hearing restored by the touch of Christ so that we may be ready to pray.

"Our troubles begin when we do as we please."—Dr. John. Douglas Adam.